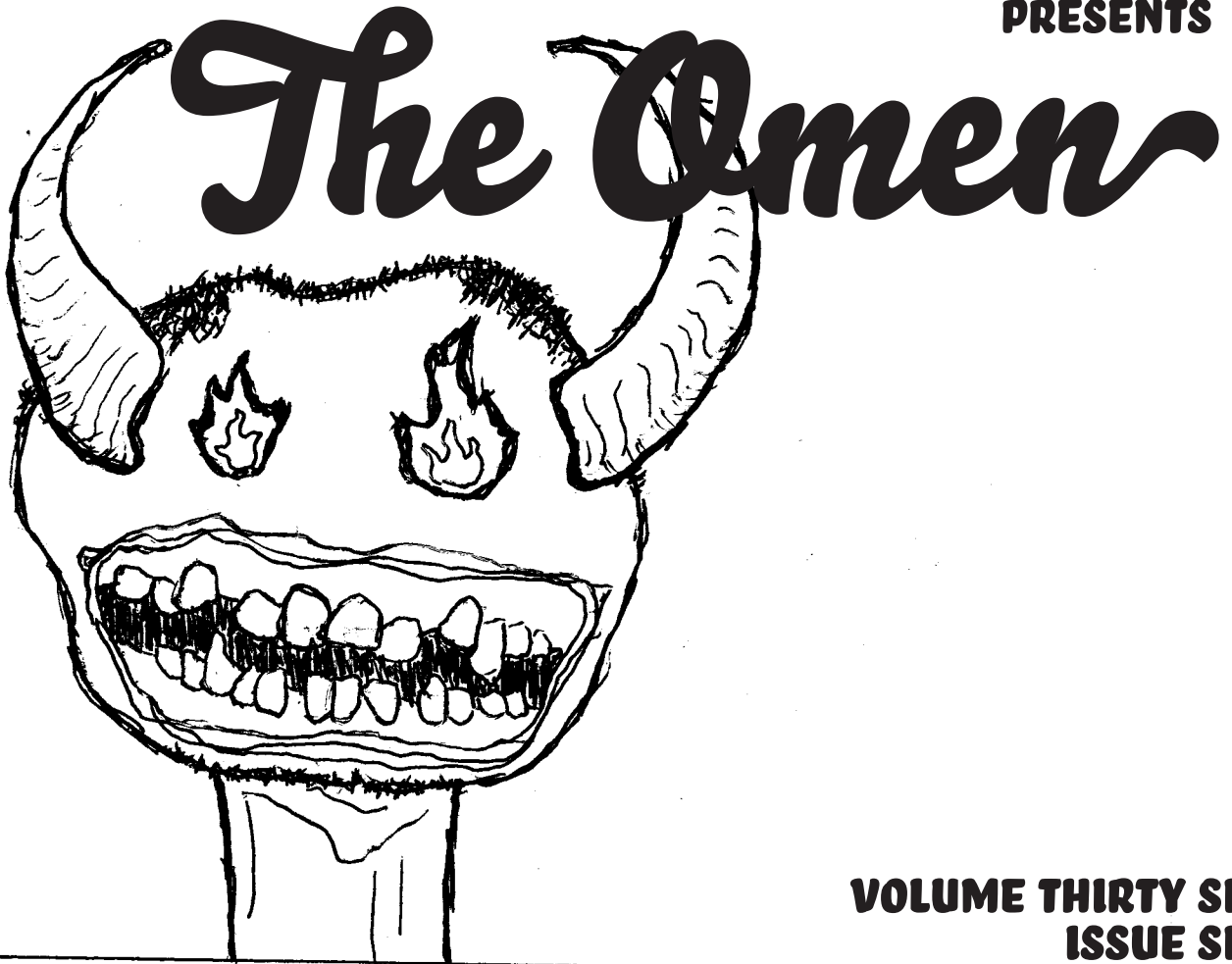


HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE
PRESENTS



VOLUME THIRTY SIX
ISSUE SIX

THE OMEN THE OMEN THE OMEN THE OMEN THE OMEN THE OMEN THE OMEN THE OMEN

SAY GOODBYE
TO THE OMEN
FOREVER!

Table of Contents

VOLUME 36, ISSUE 6

SPEAK: CHINA SHOULD INVEST IN NEW ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES WITH ITS \$3 TRILLION RESERVES • HEY, OMEN READERS! • AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BRAVO PRODUCERS • PREPARE YOURSELF FOR AN OMENLESS LIFE • REINVENTING HAMPSHIRE'S OPEN MIC: A MANIFESTO
HATE: CAN'T TAKE A JOKE? NOW LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE DONE. • THE NEXT PERSON TO CALL ME A LESBIAN IS GETTING PUNCHED IN THE FACE.
LIES: THE COLD • SLEEPING BEAUTY IN THE WOOD • CATBOX

Staff

Evan Silberman
Part of Zilong's plan
Stephanie Schmidt
*The Omen office hasn't been
turned into an opium den yet.*
Sky Reid-Mills
*Because they're occupying
the Omen office.*
Fiona Stewart-Taylor
Lack of map
Ben Batchelder
"PLAY FREEBIRD!!"

Rachel Ithen
Too many people there
Devin Morse
They haven't given us any pandas
Greg Larsen
I'm Mr. Moneybags
Ian McEwen
Orientalism
Grace Rosen
Bad fortune cookies
Stephen Morton
Wow, penises. I love 'em!

Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

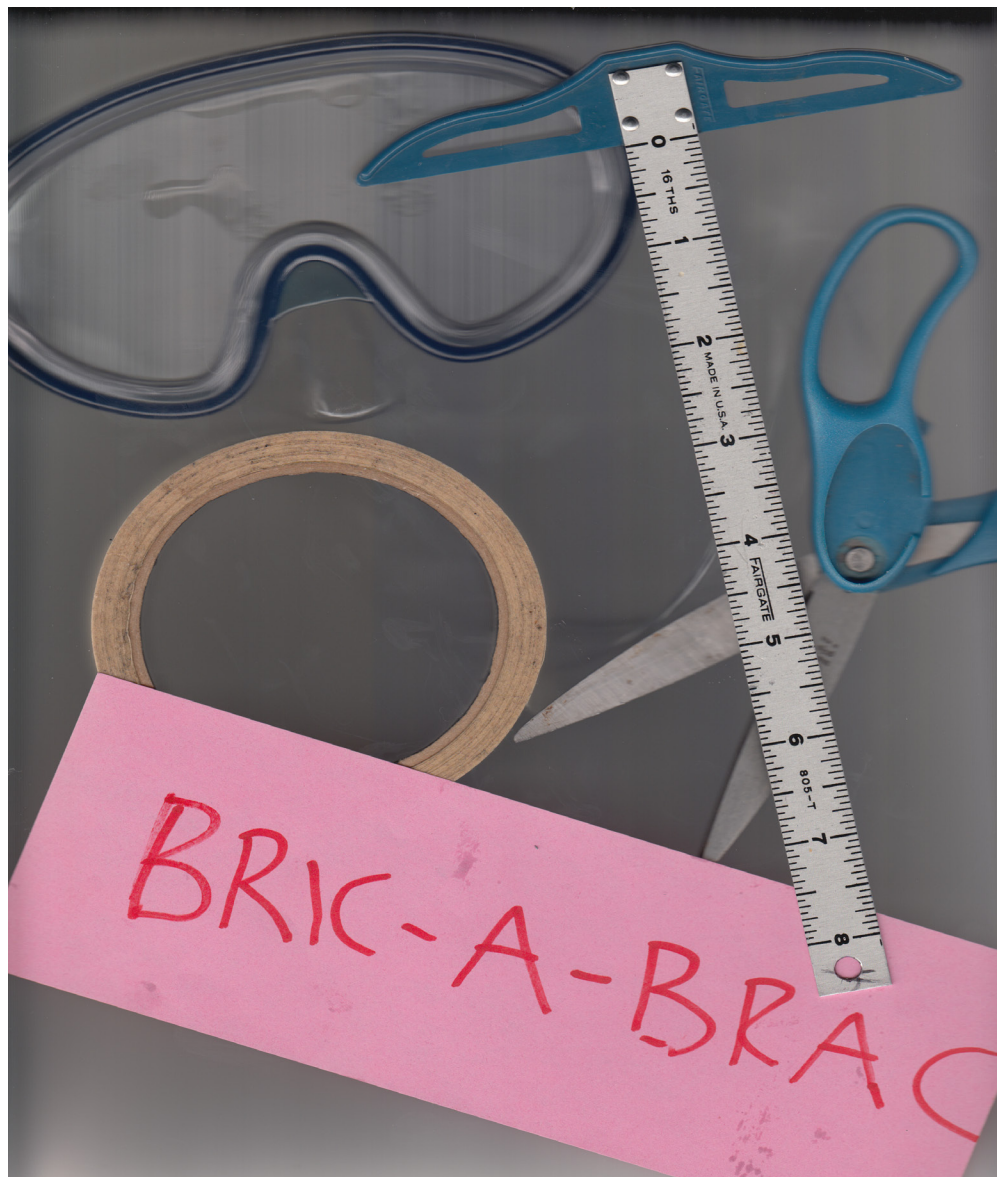
Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. Your submission must include your real name: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Thursday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Thursdays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

A VISUAL EDITORIAL:

A taste of the Omen Office

COLLATED *by* BEN BATCHELDER *and* TITLED *by* IAN MCEWEN



TO SUBMIT

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu or Ian McEwen, Box 286.

THE OMEN HAIKU

*views in the Omen
do not necessarily
reflect the staff's views*

Section: Speak

China Should invest in new energy technologies worldwide with its \$3 trillion reserves

ZILONG WANG

In a funny article* from The Economist, it says that China's \$3 trillion foreign reserve can do the following:

"China could buy all of the outstanding sovereign debt of Spain, Ireland, Portugal and Greece, solving the euro area's debt crisis in a trice. And it would still have almost half of its reserves left over."

Or the following:

"China could gobble up Apple, Microsoft, IBM and Google for less than \$1 trillion. It could also follow the lead of those sheikhs and oligarchs who like to buy English football clubs. According to Forbes magazine, the 50 most valuable sports franchises around the world were worth only \$50.4 billion last year, less than 2% of China's reserves."

The article also mentioned that China's entire foreign reserves can buy "about 88% of this year's global oil supply". This shopping item really attracted my attention: 60 years worth of Chinese accumulation of wealth is only equivalent to 10 months of global oil supply!

Surely China is not going to buy any of the above-mentioned fantasy items. Instead, I would propose that China does the following: to invest a substantial proportion of its foreign reserves to fund all kinds of new energy projects around the world. Energy storage (battery), electric cars, smart grid, new generation nuclear technology (thorium), energy conservation, bio-fuels... The possibility is endless, and the world is not in lack of ideas. There are so many wonderful entrepreneurs and

brilliant projects, but not enough support from government and investors. The risk is usually too high for most private investors, and the U.S. government is not taking advantage of America's dynamic innovation machine. China's \$3 trillion foreign reserves could meet the gap.

China has been America's generous lender for years. Why not become the global venture capitalist? Instead of earning pitiful return on U.S. treasuries, China should have the vision and courage to invest its money in the future of world energy. China should set up a venture capital fund, go find the most promising ideas in the new energy industry, fund them, nurture them, and believe in them. The projects could come from anywhere and anyone, as long as it has the potential. Even if 90% of the projects fail, as long as we have a few technological breakthroughs, we will revolutionize our energy future and solve many of our most urgent problems like foreign oil reliance, pollution, and economic recession.

In this way, China's huge foreign reserves would not be blamed to cause global imbalance; instead, it is doing the whole world a service by investing in the future at a time when nobody wants to take on the risk. If we combine the capital from China and the innovation from around the world, we will have a much better chance to find solutions to our common challenges!

* <http://www.economist.com/node/18560525> 

HEY, OMEN READERS!

This is your friendly Omen signer using this space to shamelessly plug her grandfather's newest book.

If you're interested, my grandfather wrote and published a book in 1999 about his time in the Spanish Civil War. That book is available in hardcover, paperback, and Spanish and German editions by searching "Comrades Harry Fisher" on Amazon.com.

Right before he died in 2003, he finished writing his second book. My mom and uncle have worked for eight years editing the manuscript and attempting to find a publishing company to work with us, and after eight years of that they have decided to publish it themselves through Amazon. Right now it's available for kindle/computer/ipad/etc., but will be available in paperback shortly. To find it, search "Legacy Harry Fisher" in Amazon.

I know you might be asking, "why would we want to read a book about the childhood/early adult years of some random person's grandfather?" First of all, grandparents have the BEST stories. My grandfather's stories happen to involve the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, the fight to create Social Security, and activism of the 1960s from a slightly older perspective than what we're used to hearing from. Here is part of the description from Amazon:

"This honest, first-person account of one man's life offers a revealing glimpse into 20th-century America and particularly into America's 20th-century left. It stands as both a testament to an entire generation of passionate and committed agents of change and as a guide for a new generation of American progressives."

I'd like to think that there are plenty of "agents of change" here at Hampshire, so if you're interested, please check it out or get in contact with me: rki09.

Thanks, folks! :)

SUBMITTED BY RACHEL ITHEN

An open letter to the Bravo Producers **BENJAMIN BATCHELDER**

Right now Tabatha's Salon Takeover is a good example of what reality shows have become, that is to say easily digestible. There is a cohesive storyline, we familiarize ourselves with the characters easily, and the episode feels more or less complete every time. But this formulaic approach to the editing process makes the people in these shows one-dimensional, their social dynamics as clear as day. And although we have much to learn from reality TV's sensibility for storytelling, it is insincere.

Another example of what reality shows have become is Fox's spinoff of the BBC show Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares, called just plain Kitchen Nightmares. Unlike TST, however, US Kitchen Nightmares is not worth watching. It has flashy editing, contrived music throughout, and the cameras shoot conversations from behind bushes to make them confidential and more exciting. TST has been exposed to much of the same process, but Kitchen Nightmares earns my hatred for how it pales in comparison with its UK counterpart, like what might happen if M. Night Shyamalan tried to recreate "Titticut Follies."

The original UK version of Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares is told in a freer, more nonfiction style. Voiceover, though present, is not the main character, nor is it provided by Fox's one narrator but by Gordon himself. Scenes are allowed to play out by themselves, without being chopped and segmented for our convenience. It gives the show its own flow.

The strength of TST and RKN is that the task at hand is never just about hair or food. These dysfunctional businesses are all limping along because of the broken relationships within them. If a husband-and-wife restaurant is failing because the couple can't stop screaming at each other, then Gordon Ramsay has to fix a marriage, not a kitchen.

The RKN audience are having the most fun when we learn about properly preparing food, just as the best part of Tabatha's Salon Takeover is when we learn about the intricacies of hairstyling. That being said, I

don't care about hair and I don't have a passion for food. But when Gordon shows the crappy chef how it's done, the show spontaneously becomes a cooking show with a natural feel. Rachel Ray and Paula Dean, learn from these shows.

I would like to see a UK-style Tabatha's Salon Takeover. Strip yourself of the formula and show us the actual process of restoring a business. Give us the details and ideas behind the big renovation, don't just show a 2-second time lapse. Show off Tabatha's scary good expertise and tell us more about the hair. What makes these stylists bad? We love to find out. When Tabatha uses real beauticians' terms like "weight point" and "guide line," we know we're learning something new, and that is the allure of a good documentary film.

Love,
Ben Batchelder 🐱



**BEN BATCHELDER
AND GRACE ROSEN
DREW THIS.**

Prepare Yourself for an Omenless Life
by Ben Batchelder

Pretend for one moment that the Omen is not a part of your life. You never get to look at my silly drawings and Rachel never gets to be adorable with her editorials. Hampshire's poetic output fully ceases to be admired. Even less people hear about Deathfest.

I'm sorry I had to be the one to put all these thoughts into your heads. I am simply trying to brace you all for the summer you are about to experience, which I can only assume will be hellish and bleak without your beloved toilet reader in your hands.

Think of how convenient it was for you to have the Omen conveniently located at Saga, sitting pretty for you as you leave, never judging you for how much you ate. Think of how the Omen was there for you in the mailroom, silently congratulating you as you pocket the \$20 bill from grandma. Convenient? And how!

But now, sad to say, the Omen is going into a semi-permanent hiatus from your life. It could be hibernating, or maybe it's being quarantined. The reason is not important. I am not here to explain to you all why this precious element of your time at Hampshire is being mercilessly wrenched away from you. My job is to make sure you all feel terrible about it.

Have a joyous vacation.

Your friend,
Ben



Reinventing Hampshire's Open Mic: A Manifesto

AARON GOTTLEIB

It is time for me to finally write this piece, which I have been thinking about for three years, ever since I first became aware of what I'll call the Hampshire Poetry Problem. As a lover of poetry, I was excited from my first day of orientation to get involved with poetry groups and events at Hampshire. I quickly discovered a wonderful community in the student group called the Hampshire College Slam Collective (HCSC), and in my first semester made many dear friends there who I remain close with today.

I was shocked, then, when several friends of mine from a different circle expressed a strong resentment of the Slam Collective because they perceived the group as being too insular, too narrow and "cliquey." They felt alienated and unwelcome at Slam Collective open mics. They made fun of the style of poetry that is dominant at Slam Collective events, and they expressed anger over the fact that many poets who write in different styles – especially students of color who write rhyming, hip hop poetry – were not being showcased.

That's when I first became aware of the problems facing Slam Collective, and by extension the Hampshire poetry scene at large. With this manifesto, I want to name these problems and open up a conversation about them with the Hampshire community. James Baldwin said "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." In that spirit, let us face these problems bravely, and in doing so begin the process of changing them.

There is a complex and dramatic history behind the formation of Slam Collective into what it currently is and has been for the last three or four years. This history is important insofar as it provides a context for understanding how we arrived at the current Poetry Problem. Without naming names or getting too caught up in the blame game, let us just say that over the course of its evolution as a student group the Collective gradually became dominated by a tight circle of friends who are very passionate about poetry and poetry slams. This group of friends – my friends – became the face of Slam Collective, and as its most active members we constructed the core values of the group. Among these values is maintaining a strong presence at outside poetry slams such as those at the Cantab Lounge in Boston, the College Union Poetry Slam Invitational (CUPSI), and the National Poetry Slam (NPS). On the one hand, the HCSC's participation in these large events is an exciting and praiseworthy accomplishment; in fact Hampshire became the first college to ever represent itself with a team at the National Poetry Slam. But on the other hand, the emphasis on involvement with regional and national poetry forums has distracted our group from its functions in the local Hampshire commu-

nity. Because of the high level of commitment required in order to attend outside events, the Collective continues to feel divided between an "inner circle" of poetry slam enthusiasts and an "outer circle" of peripheral members who attend the open mics on and off. Also, many of the poets who are in the "inner circle" are close friends who are often consuming the same poetry. As a result, newcomers often get the sense that there is a certain style of "slam poetry" that is favored at HCSC events. The same five, six, or seven poets regularly read their work, and these poets become like mini-celebrities in our own small circle of writer-friends. Every week, we get to be the stars. It is easy to feel intimidated by a tight-knit group like this.

It is really a shame that the Slam Collective open mics attract only meager turnouts, because there are so many self-identified poets at Hampshire who should in theory feel comfortable attending an event where other poets, writers and artists can share their work and connect with each other on a weekly basis. I am disheartened when I think of all the poets I know who have come to Slam Collective open mics and felt too intimidated or alienated to return regularly. One challenge is that the poetry slam format requires audience members to rank poems and poets in relation to each other, and thereby creates a paradigm that constructs poetry as something that can be judged objectively. While the poetry slam game can be useful for getting people excited about poetry, it has unfortunately created a competitive environment that encourages poets to be ambitious and self-promoting. We slammers often have trouble remembering that essential truth about poetry slam: "The point is not the points, the point is the poetry." In the last few years, our Slam Collective has become too concerned with its own name and fame in outside venues such as the Cantab Lounge, CUPSI, and NPS. Meanwhile, the group continues to attract small numbers. In order for the HCSC to expand its borders and include more of the Hampshire student body, this competitive paradigm has to be subverted. More emphasis should be placed on providing a safe space for writers on our own campus, rather than promoting a few regulars to more prestigious spheres. We must ask ourselves to what extent it is problematic for the Slam Collective to represent Hampshire at outside events such as Poetry Night at the Cantab Lounge, CUPSI, or NPS, while remaining a small, exclusive group on a campus filled with a diverse multitude of poets. Are we really representing Hampshire, or merely our own clique?

It is also problematic for a student group dedicated to "slam" to host an open mic where hip hop poetry is not represented, because this reinforces a racist dichotomy that separates "poetry" from "rap," and implicitly privileges the former. Stu-

dents of color who come to HCSC events with the intention of performing a rap are inevitably perceived as different from the majority. This difference in writing style then becomes racially interpellated; black emcees are positioned as “other,” and thus their voices become marginalized. This problem, which began about three years ago when the group first became dominated by a tight circle of friends, has now become a chicken-and-egg scenario. Though me and my friends at Slam Collective are well-intentioned and have tried to reach out to the larger Hampshire community, the problem remains unchanged. So far, we have not done enough to challenge it.

It is understandable, then, why a second poetry group was formed, “Urban Word,” that is dedicated to promoting more hip-hop-influenced styles of poetry. This group filled a hole in Hampshire’s student community by providing safe spaces for students of color who are emcees, rappers, or any other sort of poet to perform their work. The group soon became very popular, more so than the HCSC, and their events seem to attract more diverse audiences. But because they focus on promoting “urban” styles of poetry, they are also appealing to a specific cultural group, and therefore do not provide a space dedicated to Hampshire’s full, vibrant community of writers.

So here, in a nutshell, is Hampshire’s Poetry Problem as I see it: instead of having a space where every member of the Hampshire community feels welcome and encouraged to share their poetry, we have two groups on campus that are holding poetry events for specific sub-communities that are separated by a racial-cultural divide. The first group, Slam Collective, is dominated by a tight-knit group of friends, a clique perhaps, that alienates newcomers who write in different styles. The second group, Urban Word, was founded in response to the need for a space that celebrates hip-hop-influenced styles of poetry, and thus defines itself more or less in opposition to the Slam Collective. The result is that both groups are staying within specific circles of writers that are defined by different cultural-racial styles, and each fail to provide a space where the two communities – both centered around poetry – coexist and overlap.

Is it just me, or does this contradict all of our so-called “progressiveness” here at Hampshire College? Why is it that we are so capable of discussing the dynamics of privilege, oppression, and difference in an academic context, but cannot seem to tackle them on our own campus? Our social politics are in glaring opposition with our ideals. This seems to be a recurring theme at Hampshire. We are experts on theories of social change, but when it comes to applying these theories in our own school community by organizing across social barriers, we appear helpless. Doesn’t it often seem like even for all of our “progressive” pride, we continue to be a student body divided by walls, schisms, and cliques? Why do so many student groups – artistic, cultural, activist, or otherwise – seem to remain so insular and separate, making little or no effort to organize together? In my experience, many students come to Hampshire with the intention of being active in several groups on campus,

but when they try to get involved find that they are unable to penetrate the cliques at the centers of these groups. Why do we struggle with cliqueness so much, and what can we do to challenge it? Especially when it comes to racial dynamics on campus, we appear to be the opposite of what we strive to imagine in our classrooms. This is an ironic subversion of Hampshire’s values. In this light, we can see how the Poetry Problem is a microcosm of the larger cultural challenges we face at Hampshire, which are themselves microcosms of the various systems of oppression that are still so deeply rooted in our country’s collective subconscious. While we are talking about the Poetry Problem, we might as well question why Hampshire does not have a student union building, or how the school perceives its role in providing spaces and events that are open to the whole student community, or in facilitating discussions on social politics of difference, or, for that matter, why there are so relatively few students of color at Hampshire in the first place.

But for now, let’s focus on the Poetry Problem. There is a racial-cultural wall through the middle of our poetry community, and not enough has been done to break it down or build bridges over it. It is important to recognize that the Slam Collective, as the group that originally became exclusive through dynamics of social barriers and privilege, is to be held responsible for that history. Having been a member of the Slam Collective for years, I can vouch that we are all good people who are aware of this problem and are trying to take steps toward solving it. These steps, though, have so far been mostly ineffective or misguided. This is because the central issue, our cliqueness, has not been focused on enough. To be fair, this problem consists of subtle dynamics that are difficult to challenge or reverse. We must be more careful about how we conduct ourselves at our open mics, making it as clear as possible that these are intended for a large, dynamic community, rather than a regular group of insiders. We should also organize more with other student groups, and discover new intersections between poetry, activism, art, music, and culture on campus. But instead of confronting the cliqueness problem head-on, we have so far made mostly superficial attempts at opening up the group, such as advertising our events with posters. Another strategy that past and present signers of the group have used to encourage diversity at HCSC events has been booking a diverse range of featured poets, including many poets of color. While a diversity of showcased professional poets is no doubt important, and I am proud of Slam Collective for our commitment to this value, this also is not a sufficient means for breaking down the group’s cultural barriers. So far our strategies have failed to attract bigger or more diverse crowds to Slam Collective open mics, likely because newcomers still feel like outsiders from the friend group that dominates the events. It is also in some ways problematic for Slam Collective to reach outside of its home community for poets of color as a strategy for “diversifying” our audience without confronting the racial tensions at our open mics, because this becomes an act of tokenization. In order for

The Omen · Vol. 36, #6

real changes to take place, we must first change our perspective on Slam Collective's mission and role on campus.

And what is that role? In my opinion, it should be primarily to provide artistic neutral zones, safe spaces for all self-identified poets to share their work, especially in the form of a weekly open mic. Hampshire desperately needs such a space, and currently neither of our poetry groups are providing it. While Urban Word has done a wonderful job of opening up the poetry community to a large portion of our student body, its project is too specific to provide such a neutral zone. It is intentionally specific, while Slam Collective has become specific through unintended circumstances. Also, because Urban Word is a performance collective with an audition process, they are not in a good position to sponsor a weekly open mic to the Hampshire community. Their work has been primarily to provide a workshop space for their own members and organize performances to showcase their work. The one or two open mics they host each semester in addition to their performances have been highly successful, but very ambitious given their group's structure. Ironically, this has complicated the Poetry Problem by creating another "closed" poetry group. We are left with two groups that are both in some ways exclusive, and without a weekly open mic that actually feels open. Because of the cyclical nature of these dynamics, Slam Collective is no longer in a position to solve the Poetry Problem on its own. This is a hole in our poetry community that both groups must work together to fill.

The argument has been made that there is nothing wrong with having two poetry groups with different missions and different target audiences. It has also been pointed out that all open mics tend to have their own circles of regulars, and that this is to some extent a natural aspect of any club. While there is some truth to these points, they still do not excuse the Poetry Problem, and to claim they do is to miss the larger picture of what is happening at Hampshire. Yes, it is ok to have two poetry groups with different focuses; this could potentially be a source of a rich artistic and cultural dialogue. But currently there is no harmonious counterpoint between the two groups but rather separation, silence, and in some cases bitter grudges left over from an unfortunate history. What we have now is a sort of laissez-faire segregation in our poetry scene, a racial boundary that must be challenged. Unless our two groups are committed to sharing spaces and conversations, we are choosing to remain comfortably ignorant of the different dimensions of our shared, changing artistic communities. In short, we need to talk to each other.

While the creation of Urban Word has opened up the poetry scene at Hampshire in important ways, the evolution of our poetry community remains limited by the divisions in our social groups. Compared to many poetry venues, both Slam Collective and Urban Word remain relatively small. Even Urban Word, which attracts somewhat larger audiences than Slam Collective, has lots of growing room. Though surely every open

mic has its regulars and to some extent an inner circle, all of the best open mics I have encountered have made it their mission to expand their circles and celebrate a larger, diverse community, based on the principle that all members are united by a love for poetry and a belief in its power as a vehicle for social change. Sometimes when I bring up this topic in conversation, I am asked where such a utopian open mic exists. I reply by saying that I am lucky enough to have grown up in Chicago, where the spoken word scene is like an enormous family that connects people from all parts of the city and suburbs with drastically different writing styles. One open mic in particular comes to mind: "Wordplay," which is hosted by Young Chicago Authors every Tuesday and continues to attract huge crowds of young people from the North side, South side, West side, and suburbs. Because of where I come from, I know that a poetry scene does not have to be divided. Indeed, we are most empowered and inspired when we celebrate the greater unity within the plurality of this mosaic artistic revolution called "spoken word." When we are stuck in our own little comfortable cliques, our poetry becomes more and more derivative, because we are not exposed to new styles that challenge our assumptions and paradigms. "Cliqeyness" is counter-productive for our growth as artists. We can only grow when we are taken out of our comfort zones and inspired by art that challenges or changes our perspectives.

This detrimental effect of homogeneity is true not only in terms of our personal evolution as artists but also on a larger scale in terms of our social evolution. How can we develop critical discussions by always "preaching to the choir?" This is ineffective. We should be using art as a forum for conversations, not monologues. We should be trying to understand and learn from each other, recognizing the unity within our diversity. I am not arguing for that cliché paradigm of "color-blindness," because blindness is never good. Rather, I want to imagine our poetry community as a rainforest: beautiful in its colorful, plural, paradoxical makeup. We need not fall back on old discourses of the "melting pot" solution to racial-cultural tensions. Instead, let us construct a new, polycultural concept of our community as a fluid, living hybrid entity. Let us put into practice our beloved theories that show us how racial-cultural identities are not essences located in individuals but rather social constructs that exist in the space between "self" and "other," relational positions of power, privilege, thought and emotion. This will allow us to openly discuss, challenge, and reinvent the categories that constrict us. Let us assume agency over our identities, and actively confront essentialist ways of thinking that put every thing and every body into neat little boxes. We would do well to remember that hip hop poetry does not belong exclusively to "black" history or culture, because history is an ongoing process that belongs to everyone, not just certain groups. Authentic performances of "hip hop" and "slam poetry" are not limited only to people with certain bodies, because cultures are inherently syncretic and porous.

In fact, the many histories, traditions, and cultures associated with “hip hop” are inextricably linked with those of “slam poetry,” and these histories collectively construct our identities as poets today. Let us reclaim this interconnectedness. From a polycultural perspective, we are not subjects but agents of cultural identity and history. In our search for authenticity, let us not allow fixed categories to tell us who we are, but embrace the never-ending process of becoming ourselves. Our choices determine who we are as much as anything else. We are the authors of ourselves and our realities. As poets, it is our duty to “write” what is wrong.

So here we are. What do we do? Regardless of who is responsible for past offenses and mistakes, let us assume equal responsibility for the future of our poetry community. The Poetry Problem has created a division that makes no sense, so what can we do to solve it? What are things that make sense? I'll get the ball rolling. First of all, we need to keep talking about these issues. Only by naming and communicating these problems can we begin to imagine and implement solutions. I would love to organize a public forum for addressing this question, such as an all-community meeting. While we are discussing the Poetry Problem, we might want to organize meetings to address issues concerning racial politics and patterns of cliqueness at Hampshire in general. What other issues on our campus intersect with the Poetry Problem, and what can we learn by comparing and exploring similar situations? I also invite any and all responses to this piece, either open or private. Consider this manifesto a long-winded conversation-starter. Let the conversation begin!

Here are some more things that make sense: What if members of both groups started making an intentional effort to attend each other's events, and also plugged each other's events at their own? What if the two groups co-sponsored at least one event every semester with the intention of building a common social network? Instead of seeing these two groups as being different communities that both happen to write poetry, let us imagine them as two projects within one community whose mission is to provide spaces for sharing and celebrating poetry. What if both collectives co-sponsored an open mic themed on “breaking walls,” an event dedicated to sharing stories of barriers or cliques on campus and ideas for mixing up different groups? What if we collaborated with other student groups on campus to combine poetry with music, art, activism, and cultural projects? Because of the powers of narrative, performance, and the spoken word to communicate emotions and experience, our two groups are actually in a position to become leaders of social transformation at Hampshire. Poets are and always have been storytellers and activists. We should be outspoken voices in community conversations on oppression, denial, and social change. We are supposed to be prophets of the revolution! If the poets aren't stepping up to the plate, who will?!

Most of all, I believe Hampshire needs a weekly open mic, in the true sense of the term: a safe, inclusive forum that wel-

comes everyone to participate in an ongoing poetic conversation. This is what will bring us together most, and this is what we must now reinvent for ourselves. We want an open mic that makes us proud of Hampshire and grateful to go here. We want an open mic that represents our vast range of poetic voices, an open mic as diverse as Hampshire itself – or more so. We want an open mic that is attended every week by thirty, forty, fifty people who feel they are all part of the same artistic family. We want an open mic that offers a community and a safe space for every student at Hampshire regardless of race, gender, sexual, religious, or national identity, where all members are respected as unique individuals with something to offer the group, where we are united by our commitment to sharing our own stories and listening closely to the stories of others. We want an open mic that upholds a commitment to our common values of Creativity, Self-Expression, Critical Dialogue, Story-Telling, Activism, Understanding, Unity, and Love. We want an open mic that exists as a progressive space for conversations on political issues in places as far away as Tibet or as close as SAGA. We want an open mic that celebrates the diversity of our creative voices, that welcomes all styles of poetry, rap, hip hop, music, and performance. We want an open mic that challenges stereotypes of what “poets” and “emcees” look or sound like, that blurs the lines between false dichotomies like page vs stage poetry, language vs political poetry, or “black” vs “white” poetry. We want an open mic that inspires artists to perform for the first time and keep performing. We want an open mic that is truly OPEN, where newcomers feel immediately welcomed and excited, an open mic that is not defined by a clique or a club but by the very hybridity of our many backgrounds, as diverse as a rainforest, ever in flux, always sharing, learning, growing, evolving.

This is my manifesto and my prayer. May such an open mic emerge from our divided groups, and may it blossom into a leading institution for progressive conversations at Hampshire. If we are what we say we are, we will definitely take on this challenge with courage. By taking steps toward breaking down racial-cultural walls at Hampshire, we will empower ourselves and others to confront such challenges in the larger contexts of our social realities, and little by little send ripples that will affect positive changes in our world. May we all unite as allies in this struggle, as many voices with a common purpose, different artists working together to imagine a better future, and may poets reclaim our timeless role as prophets of Justice and Truth!

Section: Hate

Can't take a joke? Now look at what you've done.

JB FRIEDLANDER

You don't know who you are, so I'm going to tell you. You are the humorless idiots who can't take a joke. You see someone who writes an opinion editorial and then you get so mad when they say something that takes a grain of truth and blows it to humorous proportions. You are the enemies of free speech because it is people like you who say "Oh, they have every right to say it, but they shouldn't". Alright you fuckers you want to see the damage your stupid way of thinking does, when you cry foul for no reason? Let me show you.

I bet everyone who is reading this Omen article knows exactly what I am talking about. The truly tragic resignation of Dr. Lazar Greenfield. For those of you that don't, Dr. Greenfield was the president-elect of the American College of Surgeons. That's right, he was elected to the position, people liked him. He was a Johns Hopkins graduate who invented the Greenfield Filter (prevents pulmonary embolisms), has written 2 textbooks, and 360 peer reviewed articles. Oh yeah, he is pretty qualified for being president of the college of surgeons. And why wouldn't you want a highly accomplished and greatly qualified doctor? Because you are an idiot.

On Valentines Day, Dr. Greenfield wrote an article entitled "Gut Feelings" which described how flies show mating preferences for other flies that share the same diet, how rotifers decide to reproduce sexually or asexually (it's stress related), and how human semen contains many mood enhancing compounds and cited a study about how females who had unprotected sex had lower incidences of suicide than females who had partners who used condoms. His joke at the end: "So there's a deeper bond between men and women than St. Valentine would have suspected, and now we know there's

a better gift for that day than chocolates." implying, of course, that semen is better than chocolate.

And that's it. WHERE IS THE FUCKING CONTROVERSY? And that is where that bunch of humorless idiots comes in. I guarantee you that 10 doctors out of 10 will never tell you that using a condom is a bad idea (unless you have a latex allergy, then they'll recommend latex free condoms). It doesn't happen. This guy knows as well as anyone who paid attention in middle school health class that the benefits of using a condom far outweigh the positives of not using one. No one is that stupid. It's a joke. He took a scientific article that had taken suicide rates and performed some statistical analysis on them, and pointed out what it doesn't mean. Scientists, real scientists, know that a single fact doesn't tell the whole story. If a study came out that showed that women with a certain waist to hip ratio were more intelligent, that doesn't mean going on a diet is going to make you better at standardized tests (that study actually came out by the way, look it up). Anyone smart enough to read the words in the "Surgery News" would know this (do you know what "endocrine/zoledronic acid therapy" is without look it up? Didn't think so).

Of course I'm wrong though, someone is that stupid. Who is it you ask, who thought that this was actually promoting unprotected sex? I give you Dr. Colleen Brophy:

"The fact that Dr. Greenfield apologized for me, for my 'taking offense' to his op ed without any insight into the implications that a physician leader advocated for unprotected sex, disturbs me."

Oh REALLY? He apologized, and you resign in

protest over an obvious joke? Quoting from TIME now:

“Dr. Colleen Brophy, professor of surgery at Vanderbilt University who resigned in protest from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) after its president, Dr. Lazar Greenfield, published a Valentine's Day-themed editorial suggesting that unprotected sex would make a better gift to women than chocolate. Referring to research finding that college women who have unprotected sex are less depressed than those who use condoms, he speculated that semen may have mood-enhancing effects.

Wow, just wow. Now Dr. Brophy isn't dumb, she just does stupid things sometimes. Her resume is really really impressive, and I'd die happy if I got to be on half as many committees she has chaired. But yeah, she did something stupid this time, and she really needs to own it. Of course he didn't apologize for promoting unprotected sex, BECAUSE HE DIDN'T. Apologizing for advocating it would be implying that HE ADVOCATED FOR IT IN THE FIRST PLACE. And he didn't you just missed the joke and just had to be heard.

Now I'm going to do some speculating here. Not the kind that gets published in the Huffington Post by Bob Ickrath “Dr. Colleen Brophy needs to get seriously laid....honest. It was a horrible attempt at humor, but dragging her two teenage daughters into it (do they read medical journals?) was even worse.”

No, that's not what I think happened here. And if you read the article Mr. Ickrath, you would know that semen is not indicated for, and you're not qualified to prescribe her some anyway.

What I think happened here is that Dr. Brophy just didn't get the joke, and she didn't want to. She saw the words, and because they didn't immediately entertain her she decided that they weren't a joke and so they must be serious. That's right, despite all the evidence to the contrary, she decided it couldn't be a joke, because she couldn't find it funny. No sense of humor, and now Dr. Greenfield has to resign with a black mark. It is really stupid and it boggles the mind that this is happening with a bunch of people you would let cut you open.

This brings me back to you people, the general criminals who are guilty of this. Aside from a lobotomy (which is indicated but I can't prescribe you one) you need to just have a fucking sense of humor. You aren't born with one, you have to cultivate it; laugh a little. But when you read articles and you want to jump up and down and shout because they offended you. Think for just one fucking second: are they joking? And remember, making a stink over a joke might make you popular with the humorless idiots who want to make a stink over nothing, but do you really want to hang out with those people?



THE NEXT PERSON TO CALL ME A LESBIAN IS GETTING PUNCHED IN *the* FACE.



*Love,
Lucy Lovett*

Section: Lies

The Cold **DAVID AXEL KURTZ**

This is a tale that I have told
To Hampshire students young and old
Who wish to know of days of yore
At their dear College, what came before
And wanting to their minds inspire
That such sweet things - for good or ill -
Can still be done at sour Shire
That their adventures too shall fill
The hearts and minds of fresh-faced lads
Or, failing that, of undergrads
I give them all, both young and old
The story of that man, The Cold

Some Hampshire students, nothing more
Kids with laptops, kids all bored
Were in their mod, spread on the floor
Wasting time on message-boards
A girl there was, with glasses thick
On What-It-Means-To-Be-A-Jew
A girl there was, with bright pink hair
On Squee-But-I'm-An-Otaku
A guy there was, in hoodie black
On I'm-A-Goth-And-So-Can-You!
A guy there was, with chest all bare
On 4ch- oh, Rules 1 and 2

From time to time they'd find a gem
Of comedy or lore
And this they'd share with the rest of them
All on the selfsame chore
A cosplay kid, a macro'd cat
Some well-trolled drama, this and that
To lurk was easy, fun, and cheap
And needed no sowing for to reap

They were alone together
In quiet soft and sweet
The goth-lad in particular
Felt his life incomplete
He wasn't doing anything
He wasn't getting-done
And for fifty grand a year, my friends
You have to have some fun

He came across a story
Down in Deep Internet
That captured his attentions
A curious vignette
A kid in Vermont's highest hills
Had spotted some strange man
In a cemetery, standing still
From dawn to dusk's long span
He was dressed as for a heavy rave
He was not very old
He introduced himself; He turned
And called himself The Cold
He stood there like a statue
An angel, or a ghost
The kid went home and dialed up
And to the net did boast

And here most cyber-stories
Would in their way conclude
With bumps or allegories
All most charmingly rude
But this story was kept alive
It did not 404
Within a week, another soul
Had seen The Cold once more
It was much the same story
Vermont; beside a grave;
A raven-haired man, his skin all wan;
And dressed as for a rave
The Cold he named himself, and said

GOD
THIS IS
A SHIT-
TON OF
TEXT

But very little more
He liked to stand among the dead
What a goth! they said. Hard-core!
From there the thread continued
He was sighted here and there
In cemeteries across the state
People would stop and stare
It came about that goths devout
Would seek The Cold to find
This Hampster, sitting in his mod
Found himself so inclined

He told the story to his friends
They balked and laughed and joked
As one a look came to their eyes
A will had been evoked
This was a thing of which they'd boast
When they had all grown old
That day when they had sought that ghost
Known only as The Cold

They knew little about him
Wherever could he be?
In Vermont: that they could infer
By a gravestone: certainly
They made a list of every place
Where Vermont lay its dead
They'd have to go to each of them
Who knew where The Cold tread?
They piled into the Subaru
Owned and driven by the otaku
The goth, the Jew, the /b/tard too
They stopped for gas, and then went to

They came to a cemetery
They stopped to look about
There was no goth-man to be seen
They got back to their route
They started with the nearest
And then they ranged far
Who knew how The Cold did it
They were glad to have a car
They searched all day and into dusk
They went home by the moon
When daylight burned, the crew returned

A nerdy-ass platoon
They set foot on more hallowed ground
Than any common priest
They stopped for gas; they skipped all class
Their will only increased

And finally, on the third day
Two hundred miles north
While walking through a row of stones
A scream it echoed forth
It came from out the otaku
It was more of a squee
They found her there, and her pink hair
Turned pinker by her glee
For standing there before her
As if a myth of old
(One dressed for an industrial club)
Was, without doubt, The Cold

He was all as had been promised
Standing there stock-still
His skin so fair, his raven hair
His presence like a chill
They called to him: Are you The Cold?
He turned and once did nod
The goth this creature did behold
Like the naked face of God
Their task complete, their life replete
With Triumph for all time
They stood there, straight as stalks of wheat
Dumb as a brace of mimes
What would they do, now they had found
That which they sought to find?
How else could their glory be crowned?
How else their deed enshrined?

It was the smiling Jewish girl
Who spoke up for the band
Want to come to Hampshire? she asked
Reached out, and took his hand
Without a pause, without a word
He nodded, did The Cold
He took the back seat, as preferred
And back to school they rode

The /b/tard asked him questions
The goth was too in awe
He spoke without inflection
The otaku did d'awwwww

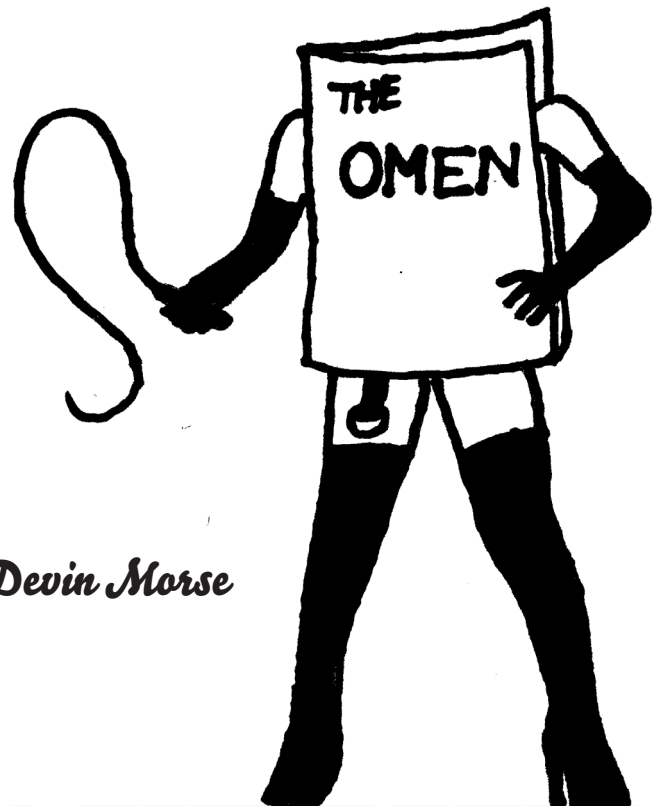
He followed them into their mod
In their common-room he stood
He never ventured to the quad
He never lowered his hood
He stood there like a mighty oak
All day, and then all night
Nobody saw him move, not once
From his lofty, gothy height
He spoke only when spoken to
His face was blank as stone
He didn't even let the otaku
Try to get him alone
He didn't eat, he didn't drink
Just over them did loom
They didn't know just what to think
Of this man in the room
Another day went by. By then
The mystery had grown
But they had work to do, and so
They left him quite alone
The four of them sat on the floor
Laptop, and then Online
They did much as they'd done before
The Cold he didn't mind

When they awoke on the next morn
The Cold was nowhere found
They wondered if he'd flown away
Or sunk into the ground
They wandered around campus
Out looking for their charge
They had no notion what commotion
Could come with him at large
Before too long they passed a friend
A gamer, very dear
He said, goth guy? About yea high?
Not many words to hear?
I saw him in the parking-lot
I offered him a ride

He asked to go to a cemetery
I told him, get inside
I drove him up to Burlington
And dropped him by a grave
He gave me fifty bucks for gas
I left; he didn't wave
The four friends they did stare at him
He shrugged, and wandered off
He didn't think too much of it
And he had things to boff

The four could only stop and think
Of what had come to pass
But not for long; they had a bong
They needed to hit before class
And that is the story of The Cold
A man like you or I
I'll carry his name until I'm dead
Will he be there when I die?
And this is a story of Hampshire
A place with much amiss
And the glorious things which can occur
When you live ridiculous

-fever + div iv = yeahhhh 🤖



Devin Morse

SUBMIT

UMass Asian Languages and Literatures and the Five College Tibetan
Studies in India Program, Smith College present:

China, Tibet, and the *Omen*: Human Rights Debate

Why Can't



the Dalai Lama and China
Omen



Find Common Ground?

April 25, 7 PM Neilson Browsing Room
Neilson Library, Smith College



Matteo Pistono, author of *In the Shadow of the Buddha: Secret Journeys, Sacred Histories*, gives an in-depth analysis of the China-Tibet controversy that has raged since China invaded Tibet in 1959. He addresses a variety of issues including why the Dalai Lama is so reviled by the Chinese government, why monks and nuns are imprisoned for praying for the Dalai Lama, and why resolution to China's problem in Tibet is dependent upon face-to-face negotiations between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama.

Sleeping Beauty in the Wood

OLIVIA JEANNE PRATO

I

But sixteen years ago today, a pair
Of babes were brought unto the world
In Fort Sopor: a boy and girl;
I, a servant, you
The kingdom's heir.

And came the seven faeries to the feast
Who each bestowed the princess gifts
Of beauty, kindness, grace, and wit
But then there was a knock,
And laughter ceased.

A faerie not invited to the fest,
Thought dead by all, now burst inside
And, standing at the cradle's side,
She cursed the princess babe
With sleeping death.

"The day the little princess turns sixteen
Her blood will spill from spindle's point
A stiff fatigue fill bone and joint
Until a prince's kiss
Can set her free."

The princess babe became a dancing girl
a-wheeling round her father's throne.
We burned the wheels like traitors' bones
While you amused yourself
With spins and twirls.

I brought you tea upon a crystal tray
"The two of us are ten years old,"
Your lips said as they sipped from gold
And brushed my cheek before
I went my way.

"My favorite place to dance is near the thrones,"
You said. "They're called my twirling nights,

I twirl there when the stars are bright.
Come watch, so I don't have
To be alone."

The maids who raised you really raised us two
And one of them had seen and heard;
They told me not to breathe a word
About the secret kiss
I shared with you.

Adele explained the secret of the curse:
That years in sleep would pass you by,
But faerie gift meant we could lie
Beside you till the spell
Could be reversed.

"For on the day the sleeping curse was laid,
The seventh kindly faerie blessed
The princess with a host to rest
Around her till the prince
Can bring her aid.

When Lady turns sixteen," Adele had sighed,
"then everyone in good Sopor
Will slump on tables, chairs, and floors.
You'll wake as just a servant,
She, a bride."

II

This year I wore a mask of black and white.
By day I sang and stirred your broth.
You passed, and dropped my cleaning cloth.
I asked to dust the thrones
On twirling nights.

By night I pleaded with the waning moon
To hold its fuller, rounder shape
To let you dance your youth away
To make eternity
Our final June.

The eve to end your waking maiden days,
The air was cold in good Sopor
The servants shivered through their chores.
At every turn, you met with
Guilty praise.

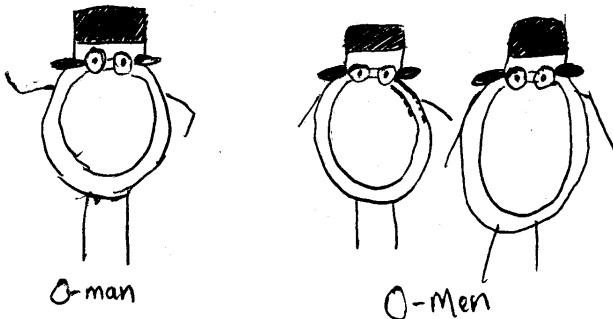
I drifted down the hall with pail and cloth
To polish glass, as servants do,
Forget that hell was burning through.
My cheeks were flaming red,
My blood a-froth.

The prince whose kiss will wake you from your sleep
Will act when none can intervene,
Will take you while you sleep serene,
And while you can't refuse
Will make you queen.

The hall to clean had mirror-studded walls.
My ruddy face a dozen times,
Reflected glares on either side,
An infantry deficient
After all.

Your dress of pearly silk slipped in the door.
You sought a place to freely dance
Away from every hollow glance;
You entered, and I bowed
Toward the floor.

You chose a floor-to-ceiling looking glass.
I found a glass to polish clean
While you and your reflection preened
And if I looked, you didn't
Think it crass.



GRACE ROSEN

Then off your earthly pearls and silken shoes.
My lips became a silly grin
As you began to leap and spin;
A treasured sight you knew
I'd not refuse.

With twelve reflections, you became thirteen
A row of bridesmaids right and left,
Your pearly silk a wedding dress
The mirror heard "I do"
As it was cleaned.

I know your hand was never meant for mine
And though our kiss just brought regret
I'll never in my life forget
That once to this valet,
You were a bride.

III

Last night I hope you never closed your eyes.
The sunrise creeps into the halls,
Its fingers crawling down the walls
Just like the truth will needle
Through our lies.

Perhaps we tried to blind you from the curse
In hopes that burning every wheel
Would weave Sopor a guarding seal
To keep you twirling free,
None for the worse.

Delusion brought my spirit in command.
I made your breakfast with Adele
And served it when you rang the bell.
With calm concern, I note
Your shaking hands.

You tell the king and queen you need your rest.
I volunteer when we presume
You'll want your luncheon in your rooms.
I use the crystal tray
You loved you best.

And thinking of myself, your grateful glance,

The Omen · Vol. 36, #6

I bow into your room to see
You lied, to wander Sopor free.
The platter drops and shatters
Into sand.

We flood the castle—servants, guards, and king.
We question all the chambermaids
In every room, we call your name
I slip the crowd to search
The mirror wing.

The floor-to-ceiling mirror was a door.
You must have noticed it last night,
The doorknob hidden from my sight;
A stair that leads me to
A tower door.

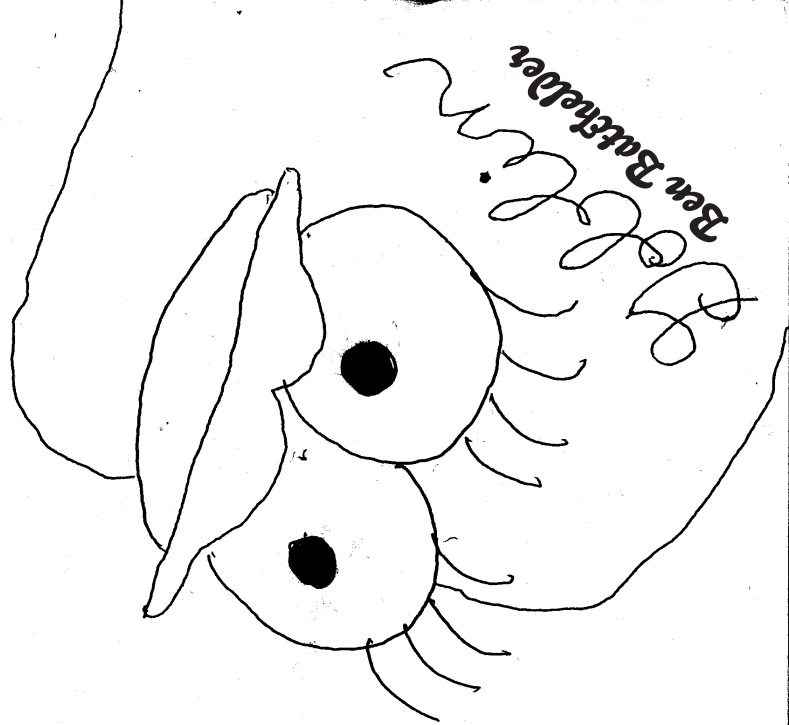
I shove inside and there you lie, asleep.
And here I see the fallen wheel,
Still spinning in its endless reel.
Your eyes are closed, your pallid
Finger bleeds.

I feel the curse extend throughout Sopor;
Now every creature but the king
Is joining your eternal dream
My limbs are weights, I'm sinking
To the floor.

That lifelong wish that drove me mad
Was that my kiss of love would do,
That kissing me might waken you,
But fairy sleep robs any
Strength I had.

We lie together in this room
Like king and queen to be interred,
No more to share a gentle word
Buried in this dusty
Tower tomb.

I'll give my thanks, immobile by your side;
For while we rest I'll be complete,
Though heaven knows, when next we meet
I'll be a servant still,
And you a bride. 🧚

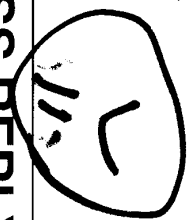


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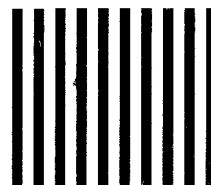
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THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



EVAN SILBERMAN

CATBOX By Gabe Brown, Henry Epp, Will Romey, and Max Rosenthal

First, take a syringe into your brain,¹

Really, don't just make this a monologue of what I'm saying.²

And wait exclamation point Can the first letter of every sentence spell something?³

Czars.⁴

The word should be fracture.⁵

Unless we want to go crazy and do something like, wait. Is this on an organ?⁶

Ra -ra. Yeah, I like it. Bo Free Floo⁷

Eject Epp. Gabe brown, where do we go from here?⁸

She drove me so long, I found out. I found out.⁹

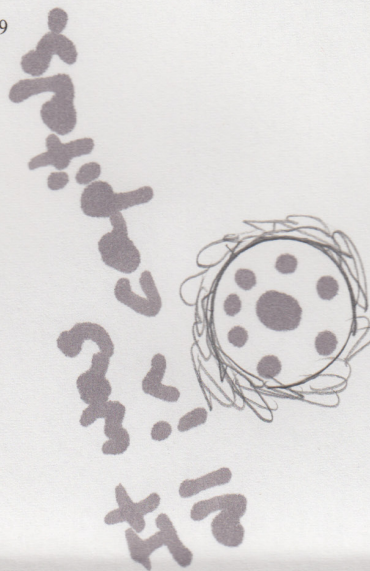
I need to get to the end of the song.

But I found out

But I found out

But I found out

But I found out



Str—Strength

Ewe—a group of sheep

Eri—Eri is something you stand in and are observed

¹ Don't actually do this.

² See what happens when you try

³ It just makes another post-script.

⁴ Should we illustrate this?

⁵ The bass organ is so good.

⁶ I swear they're like psychic.

⁷ See: PVTA.

⁸ Angus Beef.



← This tastes good.

		in.
Ang —angusent beef	Ath —Something you'd put in your mouth and feel better for.	Sn't —Sounds like a hamburger joint.

DEAR [REDACTED],

I'M VERY SORRY THIS IS [REDACTED].
 ALTHOUGH I'D HAVE A CHAIR IN THE-
 EATRE, I WAS UNAWARE THAT IF I
 WANTED A [REDACTED] MEM [REDACTED] IN CREAT-
 [REDACTED] WRIT [REDACTED] I'D HAVE TO FILL OUT
 A DIV [REDACTED] REQUEST FORM. NOW I'M
 UNAWARE THINKING THAT WAS KIND OF
 STUPID. I PROMISE TO BE [REDACTED] SCATTER
 BLAINED IN DIV [REDACTED] L

Expert Advice

Ask the pharmacist about your prescriptions, managing side effects, and over-the-counter medications. Plus, we can help you with Medicare Part D and other insurance questions.

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Try not to stand on your own side
during an argument.

LEARN CHINESE - Husband
丈(zhàng)夫(fu)
Lucky Numbers 54, 40, 31, 11, 28, 4

When both feet are planted
firmly, nothing can shake you.

A true friend is someone who is
there for you when he'd rather be
anywhere else.

They can because they think they
can.

Fortune said a palm can say a lot.
Especially when it smacks

Anyone can memorize things, but
the important thing is to
understand it.

Great men live dangerously.
small men don't take chances.

You can't stop the waves, but you
can learn to surf.